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– Rwanda –



Y4HR

Final Report



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Table of Contents

04	Executive Summary
12	<p>Details on the completed activities</p> <p>YEAR 1:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Youth Discussion Forums 2. The survey on the public perception about vulnerable group's rights 3. The training of trainers for human rights advocates 4. The user-friendly flyers (256 distributed) 5. Establishing a network of Human Rights Advocates
17	<p>YEAR 2:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Youth Discussion Forums 2. Strategic meeting between LGBTI associations and mainstream civil society organizations 3. Human Rights Defenders Network meeting 4. Thought leaders training in Bugesera 5. Human Rights Theater 6. Annual essay writing competition 7. Human Rights defenders network meeting
21	<p>YEAR 3:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Youth citizen reporters training 2. Youth discussion forums 3. National conference on Human Rights 4. Youth who participated in the Y4HR Project in leadership positions <p>Quotes from some of the participants in the Y4HR Project</p>
24	Conclusion
25	Annex

Executive Summary

The Youth for Human Rights (Y4HR) project was implemented by Never Again Rwanda and intended to build the capacity of Rwandan youth to be advocates for their rights and those of others, especially, the vulnerable groups in Rwanda – particularly the Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual, Transgender and Intersex (LGBTI) community. The project responded to the intolerance and human rights challenges that are constantly not only seen in Rwanda but also within the Region. Therefore by engaging young people, the project served as an entry point and since young people are potential agents of change, the activities implemented have had far-reaching impact for the respect of diversity and difference, which need to be sown and developed further among Rwandans.

Y4HR was implemented in the eight districts which represented all the provinces of Rwanda including Nyabihu in the Western Province, Musanze Northern Province, Huye, Southern Province, Bugesera and Rwamagana, in the Eastern Province, Kicukiro, Gasabo and Nyarugenge in the City of Kigali. Although the project which begun in May 2014 was meant to close in May 2017, but since all the activities scheduled were fully implemented by March 2017 hence both USAID and NAR agreed on closing the project by then.

The final project report highlights the activities implemented throughout the project span and the impact achieved so far. Equally, this report presents some of the success stories from the participants.



Outline of the activities implemented

The following table gives a summary of the activities in the Youth for Human Rights Project (Y4HR) implemented between May 2014 and March 2017:

2014	2015	2016	2017
57 Human Rights Articles published	16 Trainers trained through training of trainers.	97 Thought Leaders trained	160 Human Rights materials distributed
20 articles posted on the online magazine.	89 Thought Leaders trained.	385 Human Rights materials distributed.	18 Human Rights Articles published
1 Human Rights Conference	23 Human Rights defenders trained and supported	99 Human Rights articles published	18 Articles posted on the Online magazine
1 Human Rights related study conducted on protection of LGBTI (241 respondents)	1 Human Rights Conference (130 youth & 13 Organizations)	48 articles posted on the online magazine	2 discussion sessions held on inclusive Human Rights approach.
6 Human Rights material developed and distributed.	3 Essay writing competitions	9 discussion sessions held on inclusive Human Rights approach.	4 radio shows aired on the topic of Human Rights in Rwanda
256 Human Rights material distributed.	10 discussion sessions held on inclusive Human Rights approach.	4 radio shows aired on the topic of Human Rights in Rwanda	2 Strategy meetings between mainstream and LGBTI Human Rights organizations
10 discussion sessions held on inclusive Human Rights approach.	2 Strategy meetings between mainstream and LGBTI Human Rights organizations	2 Strategy meetings between mainstream and LGBTI Human Rights organizations	8 members of LGBTI groups involved in broader Civil Society
5 radio talk shows aired on the topics of human rights in Rwanda.	19 articles posted on the online magazine	24 members of LGBTI groups involved in broader Civil Society	10 Human Rights defenders trained and supported
	746 Human Rights materials distributed	2 public policies and laws introduced, changed, repealed or implemented consistent with citizens output.	6 Rwandan Youth and Community associations, youth leaders and NAR clubs members participating in the leadership and decision making positions
	36 members of LGBTI groups involved in broader Civil Society	17 Human Rights defenders trained and supported	
	11 radio shows aired on the topic of Human Rights in Rwanda	2 Essay writing competitions	
	30 Human Rights Articles published	1 Human Rights Conference (130 youth & 30 organizations)	
	2 Rwandan Youth and Community associations, youth leaders and NAR clubs members participating in the leadership and decision making positions	4 Rwandan Youth and Community associations, youth leaders and NAR clubs members participating in the leadership and decision making positions	



Year 1:

The survey targeted 5 districts of Rwanda including Rwamagana, Nyabihu, Huye, Bugesera, Musanze and Gasabo. Considering the sensitivity of the issues, the survey was conceived with a Do No-Harm approach.

Details on the completed activities;

Year 1:

During the first year of the project, the project team conducted The Survey on the Public Perception about Vulnerable Group's Rights, which whose goal was to inform the project's performance and at the same time demonstrate youth's level of awareness on human rights particularly the right of the vulnerable populations like the LGBTI. In order to achieve the goals of the project, NAR developed tools to be used to train the youth on human rights and to also communicate effectively the objectives of the project. Those were distributed in Human Rights trainings, youth discussions and thought leaders trainings. 10 youth discussion forums, with over 3500 participants, were held to discuss various issues affecting the youth.

1. Youth Discussion Forums

In Year 1, 10 youth discussion forums, bringing together a total of 3500 participants, were hosted by NAR within the framework of the Youth For Human Rights project. Topics discussed included:

- Understanding human rights: Is there any conflict between HR and culture?
- Freedom of expression
- Overcoming violence in our communities
- Sexual and reproductive rights: legislation versus culture

The outcome of the discussions was an increased understanding of human rights and the need to protect and promote them.

2. The survey on the public perception about vulnerable group's rights

The survey targeted 5 districts of Rwanda including **Rwamagana**, **Nyabihu**, **Huye**, **Bugesera**, **Musanze** and **Gasabo**.

Considering the sensitivity of the issues, the survey was conceived with a Do No-Harm approach. Questions did not focus only on sexual minorities but also on other vulnerable groups (such as women, children and the disabled) and human rights violations in the society. 3 questions referring specifically on sexual minorities intended to find out if sexual orientation was considered as a human rights, what should be the attitudes towards sexual minorities and if sexual minorities are known by the youth.

In June, 6 sessions were organized for survey. A brief background of the survey and a brief explanation of some keys issues to enable the youth to respond from an informed point of view were provided. The questionnaire was distributed during a discussion session to ease an understanding of the process. During the discussions, the majority of the youth did not know what is sexual orientation and sexual minorities. Another objective of the discussion session was to provide a platform for discussion and to impart knowledge on what are sexual minorities and giving a holistic approach of human

rights to the youth. The sessions have been successfully conducted as the youth were free to express themselves and ask various questions on topics which are sometimes sensitive. During one of the sessions, one of the participants from Gasabo district was caught up by emotions and disclosed her sexual orientation. She mentioned that it was the first discussion of the kind which provided a safe environment.

In total 241 respondents participated in the survey of which 85% responded to all questions. From the survey, 68 percent of respondents have a good understanding of human rights, while 53 percent stated that they had learned about human rights in school or conferences. Respondents in the targeted district identified, women, girls, children, people with disabilities and sexual minorities as vulnerable and marginalized groups. The most commonly identified human rights issues included early marriage, unsafe abortions, lack of freedom of expression and inequitable access to health care due to sexual orientation. As mentioned above, sexual minorities are the most marginalized of these populations, and specific questions





on sexual minorities were therefore included in the questionnaire. Over the 71 percent of respondents reported having heard of sexual minorities before, 55 percent considered them as abnormal and/or mentally disabled.

While a small number of respondents consider sexual orientation as a right, the survey reveals that a majority of the sampled population believes that having sexual orientation to the same sex as abnormal.

In addition to the above mentioned sessions, a meeting on gender identity and sexual orientation was convened at NAR's office between NAR, LGBTI associations and USAID on 18th July 2014.

3. The training of trainers for human rights advocates

Using the Human Rights Training Manual which was developed by NAR, a training of trainers was conducted from 6th to 8th October 2014, NAR in Rwamagana aiming at training various categories of Rwandan youth including schooling and non-schooling communities, associations and cooperatives of young people, thought leaders on human rights in order to increase the culture of human rights and tolerance of diversity in the society.

Thought leaders included young leaders in the local administration, teachers, young church leaders, youth leading influential or large associations and cooperatives, leaders of the national youth council, the LGBTI community, and other young opinion leaders. The training focused on 6 modules including introduction to human rights, substantive rights, gender and human rights, freedom

of expression and opinion, human rights protection mechanism; the role of the youth in the protection of human rights and human rights advocacy. The human rights training manual was instrumental in training 16 trainers recruited from 8 districts. The trainers were recruited from leaders in the national youth council, district leaders, teachers and influential youth cooperatives.

These modules were validated in a brainstorming meeting that brought together 8 human rights defenders and organisations on August 22nd 2014, which included 1. a representative of the LGBTI community, 2. a representative of Initiatives for Peace and Human Rights (IPHR), 3. a representative of the Youth Association for Human Rights Promotion and Development (AJPRODHO), 4. a representative of the Centre d'études et de Coopération Internationale (CECI), 5. a representative of Ligue Rwandaise pour la Promotion et la Défense des Droits de l'Homme (LIPRODHOR), 6. Commission Nationale des Droits de la Personne (CNDP), 7. a representative of the US agency for International Development (USAID) and 8. a representative of International Alert and the NAR Y4HR team.

4. The user-friendly flyers (256 distributed)

The user-friendly flyers and the discussion papers contain the reason and the necessity of human rights, the definition of human rights and the key characteristics of human rights.

In addition, the discussion papers highlight the key elements to be taken into consideration while discussing human



rights in Rwanda. These include a paper on freedom of expression, a paper on sexual reproductive rights, and a paper on characteristics and principles of human rights. In total 256 copies were distributed and used by the youth participants.

5. Establishing a network of Human Rights Advocates

Civil Society Organizations have a significant role in providing a place where citizens can freely voice their opinion. Never Again Rwanda recognized that there was a need to improve the collaboration and information sharing between different the civil society organizations in order to improve the advocacy of human rights. It is in this spirit that Never Again Rwanda started a network of Human Rights Defenders in this quarter. Seeking to improve and

strengthen the collaboration between human rights advocates in Rwanda, share current experience in the human rights work by different organizations and create a platform for discussion on the current human rights issues.

Meetings organized during year one brought together 12 individuals from various human rights organizations which are Youth Association for Human Rights Promotion and Development (AJPRODHO), Centre d'études et de Coopération Internationale (CECI), Collectif des Ligues pour la Defense des Droits de l'Homme (CLADHO), Ligue Rwandaise pour la Promotion et La Défense des Droits de l'Homme (LIPRODHOR), Commission Nationale de Lutte Contre le Genocide (CNLG), Health Development Initiative (HDI), Governance For Africa,

Fight Illiteracy Youth Organization (FIYO), Human Rights First Association (HRFA) National Unit and Reconciliation Commission (NURC), Ligue des Droits de la Personnes dans la region des Grands-Lacs (LDGL) and Never Again Rwanda.

The objective of the first meeting was to address the challenge met in the area of coordination and information sharing between human rights organisations. As an outcome of the meeting, human rights organisations agreed to create an informal network of human rights advocates which will have three pillars including experience sharing, coordination of actions and common stance. This network will favor a better system of knowledge sharing and increase the collaboration and networking for better human rights advocacy.



Picture 1 : Meeting between NAR, USAID and LGBTI Associations.

Year 2:



Year 2:

In this second year of the project, we used the tools developed in the Year 1 to empower more youth through trainings, we also strengthened the Human Rights Defenders Network and finally we introduced theater in our Human Rights trainings as a tool to better engage the youth. In order to strengthen the advocacy for LGBTI rights, NAR hosted 2 strategic meetings that brought together LGBTI organizations and mainstream civil society organizations. As a way to increase platforms on which youth can discuss and share their views on various issues, NAR hosted 10 youth discussions forums and essay competitions.

1. Youth Discussion Forums

10 youth discussion forums were organized by NAR this year, which brought together 815 youth from various districts. The topic included:

- Sexual and reproductive rights
- Gender issues
- Youth unemployment
- Early pregnancies
- National human rights protection mechanisms



The outcome of the discussion was an empowered youth that is able to think critically about issues affecting their communities.

2. Strategic meeting between LGBTI associations and mainstream civil society organizations

This year, 2 strategic meetings brought together LGBTI associations and mainstream civil society organizations to discuss and share ideas on advocacy. The 2 meetings had the aim to create a safe network where health issues regarding LGBTI can be addressed and also how to strengthen the relationship between the LGBTI association and the mainstream NGOs. The outcome was the establishment of a safe network through which the LGBTI associations and the mainstream NGOs can interact and learn from each other



3. Human Rights Defenders Network meeting

The meeting was hosted on March 13th 2015 at NAR's offices and focused on the development of a road map and an action plan for the network. As a result, themes for future discussions were developed and included freedom of expression, illegal detention freedom of the media, human rights status in Rwanda and the human rights reporting processes. It was recommended that when needed, discussions within the network will be followed by concrete actions to address the challenges raised. However it appeared that advocates in the platform tend to avoid or have limited knowledge about the no go areas such as sexual minorities rights or civil and political rights.





Picture 3: Members of the Human Rights Defenders Network at NAR for discussions.

The established network provided a free space where all issues were freely discussed irrespective of the fact that participants shared or not the opinions on different issues. The most important aim of this platform is to share information on major and challenging issues in the Rwandan society and reflect on how they can be addressed.

4. Thought leaders training in Bugesera

In order to create a more lasting and big impact, we organized Thought Leaders Training to train more youth leaders who would then go back in their community and train others about Human Rights. A training of carefully selected thought leaders was then organized.

From the 25th to 26th June 2015, NAR organized a thought leaders training in Bugesera, which was attended by 30 youth from Musanze and Bugesera. The trainees

were selected based on their influence on the youth and their ability to bring about change in their communities. Participants were selected from the National Youth Council, teachers, NAR youth leaders from various organizations and the LGBTI community.

The two-day training educated the participants on the main human rights principles, instruments and challenges. The training covered an introduction to human rights, substantive rights, gender and human rights, freedom of expression and opinion, human rights protection mechanism, the role of the youth in the protection of human rights, the protection of human rights and human rights advocacy.

The objectives of the training were to increase the trainees' knowledge on human rights and to familiarize the participants on the developed human rights training manual.

“Before attending this training I was thinking that Human Rights are of concern to the police and the courts, but this training opened my eyes, now, I know that human rights are my concern.”

Anselme Ngarambe, A Youth Leader and Participant in Y4HR's Thought Leaders Training (Musanze District, Northern Province)



The drive to adopt human rights advocacy as a commitment was felt among all participants in the training. While giving their group presentations, participants shared that they plan to increase their networking in order to spread the knowledge learned in the training as one of the strategies they were trained on.

Mukayiranga Niceratha, a youth representative from Bugesera, was also motivated to take action to advocate for human rights after she completed the training. She said she found the training valuable because she learned about the rights of children. "Children especially the disabled are deprived from some basic rights in their families," said Niceratha. "I am going to start advocating for them. I know that this is not an easy task, but this training equipped me with the necessary tools" added Niceratha. She said she plans to start advocating for the rights of the children in her neighborhood.

Before he took part in the training, Anselme Ngarambe had no idea the difference he could make in advancing human rights in Rwanda. "Before attending this training I was thinking that human rights is work for

police and courts, but this training opened my eyes," said Anselme, who travelled to Bugesera from his home in the northern Musanze district to learn about his role in advocating for human rights. "Now, I know that human rights are my concern." For Anselme, the training inspired him to take action to promote human rights within his own community.

Beside experts' presentations, participants had group work sessions where they put their knowledge into practice and draft an advocacy strategy regarding specific human rights issues in Rwanda. Brainstorming was also used before the beginning of some presentations. During these presentations, participants raised among others questions regarding the cultural and religious concerns about sexual minorities. At the end of the module on gender, although all participants did not have the same views on culture and religion, they understood that there should not be any discrimination based on sexual orientation and that, legally, is not prohibited in the Rwandan law.

"Children especially the disabled are deprived some basic rights in their families, so am going to start advocating for them. I know that this is not an easy task, but this training equipped me with the necessary tools".

Niceratha Mukayiranga -Youth Leader and Participant in Y4HR's Thought Leaders Training (Bugesera District, Eastern Province)





Picture 4 : Participants in the Thought Leaders training with their certificates.

“Respect of human rights is not a requirement to love but rather to respect others. Since they also are human beings (sexual minorities) like us, I do not see why they should not participate or claim their rights. Their views should also be considered.”

Regis Mutabaruka, Youth Participant (Bugesera District, Eastern Province)

5. Human Rights Theater

Youth for Human Rights was a project with the youth at the center of it and in order to appeal to them, various youth friendly methods were used. One of those is theater. Never Again Rwanda has always used theater to get different messages across and engage the audience into an open discussion on hard issues. This was no different in Y4HR, where it was used to teach Human Rights principles.

On 10th July 2015, 2 youth from NAR club ‘abasangirangendo’ organized a Human Rights theater called ‘kubaha uburengazira bwa muntu’ a respect of the human rights. The youth used the human rights training manual to conceive the rights theater portraying all the 6 modules. This initiative was used by the

youth to share with their peers what they have acquired during the training of trainers.

6. Annual essay writing competition

For the youth to develop critical thinking skills, platforms are needed where they can express themselves in different issues affecting them. One of those platforms, created by NAR, through the Y4HR project is the Essay Writing Competition. It is a competition held annually is opened to high schools and universities, with winners announced during the National Conference on Human Rights. The aim is to encourage critical thinking by the youth, which will lead to better leaders of tomorrow.



In Year 2, 99 young people from various schools participated in this annual competition which was held from September to December. Three topics, were chosen based on the issues which emerged in Y4HR activities and the then current human rights issues in Rwanda.

The topics were:

- i. Curbing teenage pregnancy in Rwanda
- ii. Building hope among the youth,
- iii. Preventing youth involvement in mass violence,

The youth had the choice to write in all the official languages of Rwanda which are English, Kinyarwanda and French. Through their essays the youth express their ideas and thoughts on ongoing human rights violations in their community and how they can be addresses. The winners of the competition were given their prizes during the National

Conference on Human Rights held on International Human Rights Day.

7. Human Rights defenders network meeting

The Human Rights Defenders network established by NAR, meet again to discuss the thematic areas and also finalize an action plan to guide the activities of the network.

On 4th March 2016, at NAR offices, a meeting brought together individuals from various human rights organizations: Centre for Rule of Law (CERULA), Collectif des Lignes pour la Defense des Droits de l'Homme (CLADHO), Centre for Human Rights and Development (CHRD), Lawyers of Hope, MPEDH and Never Again Rwanda. The meeting with human rights defenders convened at NAR office and agreed on the following key points:

It was recommended that the action plan for which the human rights defenders ought to operate be reviewed and approved to guide ways of work.

It was also agreed to have a meeting every last Friday of the month to review progress and share experiences.

The meeting recommended working on the following issues:

- 1) To take action and follow up on the Illegal detention
- 2) Assess the impact of use of ICT to the local citizens especially with regards to payment of taxes and government revenues.
- 3) To conduct a preliminary survey on challenges facing the LGBTI community as a fact finding assessment done by human rights defenders.



Picture 5 : Participants in the Essay Competition after receiving their certificates from NAR management

“I am a human rights activist but I did not know that LGBTI organizations existed in Rwanda. I am glad NAR brought Civil Society organizations and LGBTI organizations, in order for them to cooperate, as the rights of everyone must be protected, without discrimination.”

Anthony Busingye, Executive Secretary of AJPRODHO, one of the members of the Human Rights Defenders Network.

Year 3:

Youth For
Human Rights



Year 3:

Year 3 being the final year of the project, Y4HR increased the reach and impact by providing more spaces for youth to gather discuss and come up with solutions to issues affecting them. This was achieved by training a youth citizen reporters group which had a duty to report on issues in their communities and NAR will publish their articles. The citizen reporters are not trained to be professional journalists, but they are empowered with skills to report constantly on issues affecting them by using soft ways like short articles, videos and photos posted on the website to increase commentaries.

NAR also hosted 10 youth discussion forums in different districts as a way to offer more platforms to the youth. As the project was concluding, but the advocacy of vulnerable groups' rights had to continue, 4 strategic meetings between LGBTI groups and mainstream civil society organizations were hosted in order to finalise the way forward. Finally, NAR hosted a conference on International Human Rights Day where human rights issues were discussed by different stakeholders such as the youth, government, media and civil society.

1. Youth citizen reporters training

Youth for Human Rights' main objective was to provide a platform for the youth to express themselves and be heard and in the process develop critical thinking skills. This is the reason Never Again Rwanda hosted a training on how to write better and also use social media to reach



Picture 6 : Youth citizen reporters at the end of their training.

a bigger audience.

On 29th June 2016, Never Again Rwanda gathered 20 young writers, in Kigali, to have a discussion on 'The role that citizen journalism can play in protecting and promoting human rights'. The youth talked about how to use different platforms such as Twitter and Instagram to gather and report news and also to bring attention to different issues in their communities.

The training centered mainly on:

- How citizen journalism can influence decision makers and create change
- How to develop compelling messages and write relevant stories
- How to pitch stories to a media outlet

The outcome was the establishment of a "Youth Citizen Reporters" group. The purpose of the group would be to find stories in their communities, that are

human rights related or of interest to the youth, that they can report on and their stories would then be published by Never Again on the Youth For Change website (www.yfcrwanda.com).

2. Strategic meeting between LGBTI associations and mainstream civil society organizations

This year, 4 strategic meetings were organized, that brought together LGBTI and mainstream organizations which discussed about introducing a human rights based approach to sexual minorities issues, how to cooperate in advocating for human rights issues and how to strengthen the network. The outcome was the strengthening of the network and the offer of support by the U.S embassy, in the form of capacity building.



Picture 7 : Youth during a Youth Discussion Forum

3. Youth discussion forums

In order to provide a safe space to discuss and express concerns about human rights issues affecting the youth, this year, 10 discussion forums were organized in various districts. In Bugesera in the Eastern Province, on the 23rd July 2016, a youth discussion forum was organized that brought together 25 participants from diverse backgrounds. The topic was "The role of the youth in participatory governance and promotion of Human Rights."

The discussion centered on the following guiding questions:

- What does it mean for the youth to have role in participatory governance and promotion of Human rights?
- What is connection between participatory governance and promotion of human rights?
- How does currently Youth play role in governance and promotion of human

rights?

- What are the existing challenges faced by youth in playing effective role in governance and promotion of Human Rights?
- What are the possible mitigations measures to enable the effective role of youth in participatory governance and promotion of Human rights?

The participants started by mentioning that a sign of good governance is that the people have rights that are respected

and protected by the government. They discussed what each of them thought qualified as human rights and emphasized on the fact that rights and duties go together. While some participants argued that the government does not consult them when making decisions, others contradicted the view by saying that it is the youth's duty to participate in governance by actively finding out the policies and making their leaders accountable to them. The discussion was marked by openness and confronting opinions.

20

Young writers, in Kigali, to have a discussion on 'The role that citizen journalism can play in protecting and promoting human rights'

160

Participants including youth, civil society organizations, government officials, development partners, human rights advocates and the media



Some of the recommendations proposed by the participants were:

- Youth should participate in community activities such as umuganda, and others.
- Youth councils should be given more power to more effectively represent the youth they are meant to serve.
- Youth should be educated to be more confident and open.
- Youth should be engaged in a better and more efficient use of technology to benefit them.
- The youth's opinions must be valued by the government and its officials at various levels.
- Youth need to be innovative in their thinking.
- More open communication is needed from the leaders to the ordinary citizen.

At the end of the discussion, participants were asked what they took away from the discussion, and the responses were that they have more knowledge about human rights, learned more about youth representation in Parliament and also about what role the youth should play in governance. The discussion ended with the handing out of human rights manuals to the participants. The manual contains description of the various human rights and how to advocate for them.

4. National conference on Human Rights

There is a need to increase platforms for discussions and also where the youth can find solutions to human rights issues themselves by using local approaches, raising awareness on the responsibility

we bear as citizens, and promoting tolerance for the diversity among the people through supporting our identity as "Rwandans". NAR organized the 3rd national human rights conferences, on International Human Rights Day, which bring together the Rwandan youth leaders, the Civil Society organizations leaders, the development partners, and relevant institutions of the government of Rwanda to reflect on what Human Rights are, what their status in Rwanda is and how we can promote and protect them.

For the Year 2016, the NAR theme was "Stand up for someone's rights today: The Role of Rwandan youth in promoting a sustainable culture of Human rights". Which is in recognition of the role young people can play in standing up for human rights in Rwanda. NAR, believes that young people need mentoring, training in critical-thinking and education in order to promote a culture of Human Rights. With the need to support human rights in Rwanda, NAR acknowledges that embracing a culture of human rights is a continuous process hence the need to create a platform where the young people can discuss about the need for building a human rights culture in the country with youth being at the forefront.

The conference was attended by 160 participants including youth, civil society organizations, government officials, development partners, human rights advocates and the media.

The U.S Embassy Deputy Chief of Mission, Matthew Roth, highlighted in his opening remarks that everyone is entitled to Human Rights no matter their nationality, ethnicity, sex or any other criteria.

He continued by saying that the understanding and protection of human rights are an essential part of democracy and that human rights are not only about freedom from violence, torture or oppression but also includes the right to speak, associate, criticize and practice one's religion.

He noted that The United States strives to protect those rights at home and advocate for them abroad, because doing so is consistent with the values and interests of America. He said countries whose citizens are free to choose their leaders, who can rely on the rule of law and have the opportunity to pursue their dreams, are more likely to be peaceful and prosperous partners in the World Community.

He underscored that the youth must take responsibility to stand for the rights of others, especially the vulnerable groups. He commended Never Again Rwanda for the work it is doing to promote Human Rights through its various activities such as human rights trainings and youth discussions.

A play by Isoko Theatre Group was educational, as well as entertaining, as it dealt with issues such as Gender-based violence, Gender-based discrimination and various other issues that hinder the rights and freedoms of the youth in Rwanda.

Members of the audience were provoked to discuss the issues highlighted by the play. The reactions were open and critical towards youth's role in promoting equality and the tolerance of diversity. NAR learnt that the theatre can be a great tool to facilitate dialogue among people, especially the youth on highly sensitive issues.



Picture 8: Youth participants during the National Conference on Human Rights 2016

As the conference brought together different stakeholders, NAR took this opportunity to have discussions on Human Rights between the youth and Human Rights advocates from different institutions.

The discussion panel was composed of Advocate Laurent Nkongori from the National Commission on Human Rights, Emmanuel Safari from CLADHO, Elie Simbakwira from LIPRODHOR and Honorable Francois Byabarumwanzi, Chairperson of the Committee on Unity, Human Rights and Fight against Genocide in the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament of Rwanda.

The discussion started with a presentation, by Honorable Francois Byabarumwanzi chairperson for the Parliamentary Commission on National Unity, Human Rights and Fight Against Genocide, on the current situation of Human Rights in Rwanda which included the legal framework.

He also highlighted different channels that

are set up by law to protect those rights, such as the Committee on Unity, Human Rights and Fight against Genocide in the Chamber of Deputies in the Parliament of Rwanda and the National Commission on Human Rights. The panel discussed many issues such as gender-based violence, access to education, child abuse and youth participation in decision-making and in policy and legislative formulation.

Youth who participated in the Y4HR Project in leadership positions

One of the aims of this project was to empower the youth through trainings and give them the capacity and confidence to take up leadership positions in their communities so that they can promote a sustainable culture of human rights. Through the various discussions hosted, NAR encouraged the youth to think critically and to be active members of their communities. Some of the project

participants on the following list joined leadership positions partially as a result of their leadership skills gained through the project:

- Jean-Claude Makuza was elected the Youth Coordinator in the sector of Bigogwe, Nyabihu District in the Western Province
- Cannilde Murerwa was elected the Women Representant in the Sector of Jenda, Nyabihu District in the Western Province and finally.
- Leonille Mukashyaka was appointed the Executive of the Sector of Bigogwe, Nyabihu District in the Western Province.

This demonstrates the success of the project, as the project trained youth capable of think critically and who have the trust of their communities to lead them. We are confident that this project will create more leaders as the years go on.

Quotes from some of the participants in the Y4HR Project



*Jean-Damascene Kalinda
NDABIRORA, Program
Officer (Human Rights) at
AJPRODHO*

1. *"The first event I participated in was the training of trainers on human rights held in Rwamagana, Eastern Province in 2014, from this training, I organized different training sessions to help the youth from University clubs and associations know about human rights principles, their role in human rights advocacy and protection mechanisms, in total I trained around 100 university students. I also appeared in "my rights" a documentary film produced by Never Again Rwanda on Human Rights issues in Rwanda, Apart from this, in other events like conferences, I met high profile people throughout this project including H.E Ambassador of USA in Rwanda and congressmen from USA, Rwandan MPS and Senior Government officials as well, all of this helped me with leadership skills.*

Ultimately, this project has changed my mentality/ mindset on LGBTI groups because I met some of them and noticed that no one should be denied of his/her rights due to his sexual orientation or feelings."



*Jean Paul Iranzi,
University Student and
Founder of Voice of Peace
Forum (Huye)*

2. *I really appreciate the great work of this Y4HR project since some of its programs created spaces for youth to express their opinions to decision-makers and broader society in order to ensure that they have an opportunity to be heard. This project also enhanced the peace building knowledge and skills of young people especially university students. Through Youth for Human Rights project; Young people are now able to express their views on what is happening in their communities since they were given access to trainings teachers, facilitators, educational programs and networks relating to Human Rights and able to promote and protect their own rights and those of others.*

Success story

Mutabaruka's story

"There is no such thing as sexual minorities!" "There should not be any special treatment of gays or lesbians" furiously exclaimed **Regis Mutabaruka**.

Mutabaruka is a youth from Mwogo sector in Bugesera district who has overtime been attending several youth discussions and debates organized by NAR where prevalent issues concerning human rights were discussed. These discussions usually involve analyses of human rights violations in the Rwandan societies not forgetting the now trending issue of sexual minorities which in particular raises many debates with many youth like Regis opposing the proposition that the LGBTI's deserve equal rights and that it is not their fault that they are who they are.

In a discussion on the right to participation which was held in Bugesera, **Mutabaruka's** home district, participants raised the issue of sexual minorities and said that they were abnormal and therefore should not be considered as other vulnerable groups such as the Batwa or children and therefore should not participate in decision making processes. However this time around participants were overwhelmed as Regis Mutabaruka responded remarkably saying that 'respect of human rights is not a requirement to love but rather to respect others. Since they also are human beings like us, I do not see why they should not participate or claim a right. Their views should also be considered.'

Coming from a youth who had previously debunked the rights of LGBTI's or sexual minorities, Mutabaruka's statement manifested the impact of holding youth discussions in regard to understanding the holistic human rights approach and accepting that people can be different and still co-exist peacefully in society.



Challenges

In the implementation of the project, NAR run into some challenges which made the implementation difficult, but they were able to be solved, here below is a summary:

- The main challenge c from the project itself which targets vulnerable communities, including LGBTI, which is a sensitive issue in Rwanda. Discussions seemed to be uncomfortable when participants had conflicting opinions on sensitive issues such as sexual minorities or reproductive health rights To mitigate that challenge, NAR started using a 'do-not-harm approach' and suitable ways of communications. This approach created an environment of

trust between participants and NAR where they are free to discuss, ask questions and contribute without any fear for their safety.

- In some instances some youth were reluctant to express their views and opinions especially on sensitive issues such as freedom of expression or minorities' rights. To mitigate that challenge, NAR called on the participants to respect others opinions but also to be mindful of sensitivities.
- Another challenge was that civil society organizations that worked in the area of Human Rights did not advocate about the rights sexual

minorities. Some said that they did not know about the existence of an LGBTI community in Rwanda and others said that it was a sensitive issue they would rather stay away from. To overcome this challenge, NAR created a network of Human Rights Defenders which was made up of civil society and LGBTI organizations, by working together; they were better equipped at advocating for the rights of sexual minorities.

All those challenges were able to be solved and the project was able to have the desired impact on the young people of Rwanda.

Lessons and recommendations

As the project comes to the end, it does not mean the end of its impact. During the 3 years of the project, NAR learned a few things that will ensure the sustainability of the project's impact. We learned that the youth actually enjoy debating controversial topics such as LGBTI when given a platform where they feel comfortable. We also learned that cultural and religious beliefs continue to hinder the tolerance of vulnerable groups, such as the LGBTI community. The youth think of LGBTI as something foreign but by involving people from the LGBTI community in all discussions and

trainings, we showed them that sexual minorities are people like everyone else and do not deserve to be maltreated or discriminated against.

Another lesson was that the youth are capable of taking leadership positions in their communities; they are just not empowered to do so, mostly due to the lack of confidence in their own abilities. Critical thinking skills are needed in that empowerment of the youth.

To sustain the impact of the project, the following are recommended:

- Follow up on all the youth we trained in order to give the support needed, for them to participate in the political processes
- Continued support of the LGBTI organizations involved in the project
- The Human Rights Defenders Network should continue the advocacy of Human Rights, with the support of NAR

We are confident that this project will create more leaders as the years go on.

Conclusion

Never Again Rwanda in partnership with USAID implemented the Youth for Human Rights Project with the main objective being the empowerment of the youth to become leaders who promote and protect Human Rights. Through the various activities, NAR aimed and achieved that objective. Participants in the project are leaders in their communities who:

- Champion the rights of the most vulnerable among them,
- Can advocate for their rights and those of others,
- Understand the role the youth can play in the development of the country and
- Who can think critically about various issues.

Through the different activities such as Youth Discussion forums and Human Rights training, NAR with the assistance of USAID, was able to shape young people's minds by not only teaching them to think critically but also by building their

confidence in tackling issues affecting them and their communities.

Another major activity was the National Conference on Human Rights, which took place on International Day of Human Rights, was an opportunity for young people to meet leaders of the country, diplomats and leaders in the civil society to discuss about the Human Rights situation in the country.

One of the objectives of the project was to empower the youth to advocate for their rights and those of others. For advocacy to be effective there's a need to build a coalition with different stakeholders and this is the reason that NAR, with the assistance of USAID, created a space where local civil society leaders and young activists can join force and work together on advocacy.

Lastly, the project was very successful in promoting understanding and tolerance

of the most vulnerable in the country. Through all its activities, be it trainings or discussion forums, the project always put an emphasis on the tolerance of different views and on the promotion of the rights of all people, but LGBTI in particular. We were able to make people understand that sexual minorities exist in Rwanda and that they deserve special treatment because of their vulnerability. It was not something that was easily understood but over time we showed the youth that Human Rights apply to everyone without discrimination.

The project reached a significant number of young people who took back to their communities what they learned, therefore extending the impact of the project. Some of these young people have taken up leadership positions in their communities, where they use critical thinking in making decisions and also stand up for their rights and those of others, especially the vulnerable ones.



Annex

Overall Project performance

Number	Name of indicators	Baseline	Overall Target	Achievements				Overall	%
				2014	2015	2016	2017		
C. 1.1	Number of thought leaders trained on human rights aspects	0	200	0	89	97	0	186	93%
C. 1.2	Number of human rights handbook/manual and educational materials distributed	200	750	256	746	385	160	1,547	206%
C. 2.1	Number of Training of Trainers trained on supporting marginalized groups	0	16	0	16	0	0	16	100%
C. 2.2	Number of human rights articles published	10	160	57	30	99	18	204	128%
C. 2.3	Number of human rights articles posted on the online magazine	10	100	20	19	48	18	105	105%
C. 3.1	Percentage change in the perception of young people on human rights particularly sexual minorities rights	24%	75%	0	0	0	0	0	0% ¹
C. 3.2	Number of discussion/dialogue sessions held on inclusive human rights approach	4	35	10	10	9	2	31	89%
C. 3.3	Number of radio programs aired	18	50	5	11	4	4	24	48%
C.3.4	Number of successful strategy meetings between mainstream and LGBTI human rights organizations.	0	10	0	2	2	2	6	60%
C.3.5	Number of LGBTI groups involved in broader civil society	0	114	0	36	24	8	68	60%
F-2.1.4-7	Number of human rights defenders trained and supported	0	50	0	23	17	10	50	100%
F-2.4.1-12	Number of public policies and laws introduced, adopted, repealed, changed or implemented consistent with citizen input	0	3	0	0	2	0	2	67%
C. 4.1	Number of essay writing competitions organized on the selected human rights topic	1	6	0	3	2	0	5	83%
C. 4.2	Number of human rights related studies conducted on protection of LGBTI	0	2	1	0	0	0	1	50%
C. 4.3	Number of national youth for change annual conference on human rights held	0	3	1	1	1	0	3	100%
C. 5.1	5.1 Number of the Rwandan Youth and Community associations, youth leaders and NAR clubs members participating in the leadership and decision making positions	0	9	0	2	4	6	12	133%

(Footnotes)

1 No Endline survey conducted to measure the change



– Rwanda –

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